



Information Resource Center  
American Embassy Buenos Aires

## **CIVIC PARTICIPATION ALERT SERVICE 1/2005**

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### **● THE INTERNET AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN RULEMAKING**

Cary Coglianese

Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government

November 2004

"Each year, regulatory agencies promulgate thousands of important rules through a process largely insulated from ordinary citizens. Many observers believe the Internet could help revolutionize the rulemaking process, allowing citizens to play a central role in the development of new government regulations. This paper expresses a contrary view. In it, I argue that existing efforts to apply information technology to rulemaking will not noticeably affect citizen participation, as these current efforts do little more than digitize the existing process without addressing the underlying obstacles to greater citizen participation."

[http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/research/wpaper.nsf/rwp/RWP04-044/\\$File/rwp\\_04\\_044\\_Coglianese.pdf](http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/research/wpaper.nsf/rwp/RWP04-044/$File/rwp_04_044_Coglianese.pdf) [pdf format, 32 pages]

### **● A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

Michell Alberti Gambone, Hanh Cao Yu\*, Heather

Lewis-Charp, Cynthia L Sipe, Johanna Laco

The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, October 2004

"Many youth-serving organizations are engaging young people in youth organizing and/or in interventions to support specific identity development in response to a need for meaningful opportunities for older and diverse youth to be civically involved in their

communities. In this paper, we explore differences in developmental outcomes and supports and opportunities among youth organizing, identity-support, and traditional youth development organizations. Survey and qualitative findings suggest significant differences, particularly in developmental outcomes such as civic activism and identity development."

<http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP23Cao.pdf> [pdf format, 16 pages]

## INVOLVING STUDENTS IN GOVERNANCE

Educational Commission of The States, National Center for Learning and Citizenship.  
November 2004

Although the vast majority of K-12 teaching in the United States takes place in classrooms, children learn from peers, their parents and other adults, and they learn in and out of school. Recognizing the value of experiential learning, high schools often place students in internships or provide job-shadowing opportunities in the community. Science teachers involve students in local environmental projects such as water or soil testing. Civics teachers encourage students to attend city council meetings to learn about local politics. And nearly every high school offers students opportunities to participate in vocational student organizations, student government, team sports and other extracurricular activities aimed at giving students opportunities to learn, and apply their learning, outside the classroom. Most state and local school systems include language in their mission or vision statements about cultivating active, involved community members and future leaders. The extracurricular activities mentioned above can provide many opportunities for leadership training, with student government probably the most clearly aimed at fostering student leadership. And civics or government courses can certainly provide opportunities for students to learn – and in some cases observe directly – how politics and government work. Yet the widely held belief that a quality education should include real-world experiences rarely leads school systems to involve students in governance and policymaking. Students are rarely involved in decisions about school or district programming, state or district graduation requirements, faculty hiring, teacher licensing or even the lunch menu – decisions that clearly affect them. Many policymakers might argue that educational governance should be left to adults. But if the mission statements of many state and district boards of education are any indication, education is as much about fostering citizenship as it is about preparing students for college and the workplace. The skills of citizenship – including leadership and informed decision making – must be learned. Involving students in governance is one way to provide opportunities for students to acquire and practice these skills. And while there are challenges for leaders to consider in bringing students into the decision making process, there also are important benefits for the students, the community and the policymaking body itself. This policy brief presents some of these benefits, with examples from across the country. Discussion also centers on the challenges of involving young people in governance and a set of questions for state and local policymakers to consider. The conclusion provides recommendations for those

considering this strategy and the useful resources help locate additional information on this issue.

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/55/86/5586.pdf> [pdf format, 8 pages]

● **LEARNING THAT LASTS FIELD GUIDE**  
Education Commission of the States  
2005

This Learning That Lasts Field Guide is intended to trigger discussion about ways to integrate and sustain high-quality service-learning, as well as to provide a clearer path to finding and employing the information in the Education Commission of the States' (ECS) 2002 publication Learning That Lasts: How Service-Learning Can Become an Integral Part of Schools, States and Communities. ECS worked with five states over a four-year period, whose efforts in service learning were documented in Learning That Lasts. It identifies specific policy, practice and capacity examples at both the state and district levels across five domains critical to the integration of high-quality service learning within a district: vision and leadership, curriculum, professional development, partnership and community, and continuous improvement. This new resource addresses many of the challenges facing service-learning advocates and provides specific strategies to move service learning from the margin to the mainstream in American schools. The Learning That Lasts Field Guide also expresses new knowledge, strategies and resources gleaned from efforts since 2002 – as collaborating states, districts and schools have increased the integration and sustainability of high-quality service-learning through policy, practice and capacity-building.

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/60/79/6079.pdf> [pdf format, 36 pages]

● **CREATING HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS THROUGH SERVICE LEARNING: A SERVICE LEARNING TRAIL GUIDE**  
Educational Commission of The States National Center for Learning and Citizenship and the Colorado Department of Education  
2004

This guide contains:

1. A description of service learning and a summary of the extensive research on the results of high-quality service-learning programs. This section also summarizes the links between service-learning and high performing schools and explains how service-learning works as a strategy in accountability reform. It provides links to resources and more in-depth analyses of state requirements and the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
2. Specific descriptions of how the service-learning process can best work at classroom, school, and district and community levels. This section contains snapshots of service learning in action at all of these levels for you to use as landmarks in your own service-learning implementation

3. An extensive resource listing of guidelines, curriculum and assessment materials, and other materials to help enhance young people's civic knowledge and skills through service-learning activities. This section includes worksheets and other tools that you can use to design and carry out service-learning efforts that are best suited for your local schools and community.

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/57/13/5713.pdf> [pdf format, 70 pages]

#### ● 6TH ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT SCORECARD: WHICH FEDERAL AGENCIES BEST INFORM THE PUBLIC?

George Mason University, Mercatus Center. April 15, 2005.

The Mercatus Center at George Mason University evaluated and ranked the annual performance reports for fiscal year 2004 required by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 and submitted by 24 Cabinet departments and other agencies covered under the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990. The results are compiled and published in this report on government and public accountability. The Mercatus Center research team judged the annual reports (due to Congress and the President by November 15, 2004) based on three criteria: transparency, benefits to the community, and forward-looking leadership. For fiscal year 2004, the Departments of Labor, State, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs produced the highest rated reports, with the Department of Commerce seeing substantial improvement. The authors note "State's 2nd place finish caps a sustained surge from 20th place in fiscal 1999." The Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and Office of Personnel Management had the lowest-ranked reports for fiscal 2004.

<http://www.mercatus.org/pdf/materials/1129.pdf> [pdf format, 79 pages]

#### ● ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

Harold C. Relyea.

Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. Updated January 7, 2005.

The Constitution of the United States makes no specific allowance for any one of the co-equal branches to have access to information held by the others and contains no provision expressly establishing a procedure for, or a right of, public access to government information. Nonetheless, Congress has legislated various public access laws. These include two records access statutes — the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) — and two meetings access statutes — the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) and the Government in the Sunshine Act (5 U.S.C. 552b). Moreover, due to the separation of powers model of the U.S. government, inter-branch conflicts over the accessibility of information are neither unexpected nor necessarily destructive. The federal courts, historically, have been reluctant to review and resolve "political questions" involving information disputes between Congress and the executive branch. Although there is considerable inter-branch cooperation, such conflicts doubtless will continue to occur on occasion.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/97-71.pdf> [pdf format, 4 pages]

## ● UNDERESTIMATING THE POWER OF NONPROFIT GOVERNANCE

Ruth McCambridge

Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Vol. 33, No. 2, 346-354 (2004)

Much of the dialogue around nonprofit boards has focused on secondary or transactional issues rather than on the question of what good governance must include in a nonprofit setting. This serves to rob the nonprofits of creativity, rigor, power, and the kind of finely tuned understanding of accountability the public should expect. By focusing on the central questions and principles of nonprofit governance rather than on structural concerns, the possibilities for a wider variation in governance models open up. All organizations are set in a larger social context, so we cannot end our reflection at the individual nonprofit level. These questions are particularly pertinent during a period when our attention is focused on governance from Wall Street to Baghdad. Some believe that public governance is overly affected by corporate interests, and we are now seeing case after case of scandals exposing ethical problems in the governance of corporations that only recently were seen as exemplary. This puts the interests of ordinary and particularly marginalized people at risk. In a democracy, the nonprofit sector is there to ensure that people have a voice in our future—at the community, national, and global levels. If we accept this as our primary role, it has implications for what should be present as constants in our governance structures.

<http://nvs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/33/2/346> [pdf format, 9 pages]

## ● RESEARCH SHOWS NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS UNPREPARED TO USE OLDER VOLUNTEERS

The National Council on Aging. March 2005

"A first-of-its-kind survey of a select group of the nation's leading non-profit organizations released today shows that they are largely unequipped to use older Americans as volunteers, even though the rapidly growing ranks of retirement-age Americans could provide a valuable resource for such groups."

Survey summary: <http://www.respectability.org/research/survey.pdf> [pdf format, 13 pages]

## ● DON'T BOWL AT NIGHT: GENDER, SAFETY, AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Amy Caiazza

Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 2005, vol. 30, no. 2]

"Do perceived levels of safety from crime or violence influence men's and women's decisions to become involved in their communities? Since many of these activities are scheduled after work, in the evenings, when it is dark out, does fear of the dark keep

people from participating in them? And do men and women approach these issues differently? That is, does perceived vulnerability to crime influence a woman's choice to become involved in different ways than it influences a man's? I investigate these questions by studying the relationships between men's and women's levels of perceived safety from crime and violence in their neighborhoods and communities, on the one hand, and their involvement in community organizations and activities, on the other hand. I analyze the ways that perceived safety interacts with other predictors of civic engagement, including income, residence, education, and parental and marital status, to influence overall levels of involvement. I find that, overall, levels of perceived safety have a more significant effect on women's civic engagement than they do on men's. For women as a group, a sense of perceived safety is strongly related to involvement in the community, while a lack of perceived safety is linked to disengagement. In contrast, among men as a group, safety plays a relatively insignificant role in encouraging or discouraging engagement."

<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/SIGNS/journal/issues/v30n2/290405/290405.html> [html format, 17 printed pages]